

**From:** Jeffrey D. Lau <jlau@OLLON.COM>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 11, 2015 8:19 PM  
**To:** Kobayashi, Ann; I , Martin, Ernie; Pine, Kymberly Marcos; Anderson, Ikaika  
Ozawa, Trevor; Fukunaga, Carol A; Manahan, Joey; Menor, Ron; Elefante, Brandon  
**Cc:** Velasco, Nicole; Hamamoto, Shawn  
**Subject:** RE: Don't Cut the Office of Economic Development Budget!  
**Importance:** High

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Aloha Chair Kobayashi,

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you a community-based perspective regarding the importance of restoring proposed cuts to the Office of Economic Development (OED).

It has recently come to my attention that, by way of your committee, the council seeks to severely cut OED's budget to the tune of almost \$100,000. While the latter amount may seem small in comparison to the City's overall operating budget, the proposed cuts to OED will dramatically throttle each and every community impacted and supported by the Community Revitalization grants.

Without the assistance of OED's Community Revitalization grants, the Chinese community will be deeply affected by the likely loss of hallmark events and community efforts such as Splendor of China, Hawaii Night in Chinatown Festival and Parade, Dragon Boat race, and the economic planning for the Arts District Community.

The Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii has established commitments to work together with the Hawaii Korea Chamber of Commerce and the Filipino Chamber of Commerce. Given the nature of our tri-chamber agreement, it would be a disappointment to see the dissolution of their respective community endeavors including the Korean Chamber's outreach and extension programming, and the Filipino Chamber's Taste of Kalihi event.

To cut OED's budget is to cut the community efforts of so many ethnic organizations and communities. We need the proposed cuts restored to ensure that historic efforts to increase Honolulu's appeal locally and globally are not diminished.

In addition, while HTA has a budget and funding for the entire state I firmly believe that the City and County of Honolulu would be severely remiss in not setting forth its own branding as an international city rivalling the great international cities of the world whether it be as a capitol, financial, educational or tourist center. A great way of promoting Honolulu is already established by its international sister city programs and relationships around the globe. Increase in funding is needed so that our city volunteer liaisons can continue their work on behalf of our great city. I believe it is a grave mistake to continue to reduce funding when other great cities continue to grow and expand their international networks. I believe much work needs to be done to increase our visibility as a great place to live, learn, work and play to create a vibrant economic society here on the Island of Oahu. I believe that our interests here on Oahu are substantially different from those of our sister islands, as we have the ability to develop and sustain strong international business and commercial enterprises here in Honolulu. We have the economic, educational and technical expertise that is not available anywhere else in this state to assist in global economic development that can create low carbon footprints and eco-friendly jobs for our residents. We have sister cities all around the world, but our liaisons cannot finance and do all the work without City assistance. We have liaisons that have worked many years

to develop these intercity relationships around the world that are presently underutilized, but that with assistance from the US Department of Commerce's Hawaii/Pacific Export Council and DBEDT's Economic Development plans could help us expand and diversify our economic opportunities in Honolulu. Clearly, we can expand educational opportunities for foreign students, create more economic opportunities with foreign capital, and further scientific research opportunities here in Honolulu where we have the educational institutions, workforce and resources to assist foreign investors and entrepreneurs. We need to get these programs back on track for Honolulu and not expect the State and HTA to look out for the Island of Oahu. Honolulu clearly should be seen as one of the great international city of the world.

Please not only restore, but increase the Office of Economic Developments budget to encourage us to expand and diversify Honolulu's opportunities for the future.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my perspective. I look forward to seeing the proposed cuts restored for the benefit of our island communities and your constituents.

Mahalo nui loa,

Jeffrey Daniel Lau

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